

W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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Fred Maia, W5YI, Editor, P. O. Box 565101, Dallas TX 75356
Electronic mail: <W5YI@w5yi.org> • Website: <<http://www.w5yi.org>>
Tel. 817-461-6443 FAX: 817-548-9594

In This Issue...

Microsoft Goes Into the Gadget Business
Comdex Trade Show in Financial Trouble
Kevin Mitnick, N6NHG on Comdex Program
Amateur Radio in the News Media
Amazon Offers Segway Human Transporter
FTC Sues 'Miss Cleo' TV Psychic
e-Bay Goes into Fixed Price Store Business
Senate Confirms Fifth FCC Commissioner
Sales and Use Taxes on Internet Purchases
High Power, Long Range Wireless LANs
FCC Radio Enforcement News
Long Range Cordless Phone Interference
21-MHz Trans-Atlantic Digital Voice QSO
WRC-2003 Conference Preparatory Meeting
IARU Region One Conference Held

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Microsoft Shows Off New Net Gadgets at Fall 2002 COMDEX

Gates Gives Sneak Preview of New Devices and Applications; Says Industry Innovation Will Exceed Expectations

In his opening night keynote address at the 23rd annual COMDEX Fall 2002 industry trade show held November 17 to 20 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates took a look at the past, present and the 'Digital Decade' ahead.

The 'Digital Decade' – from 2000 to 2009 – is Microsoft's vision of the first ten years of the 21st century – and the yardstick by which the company's products, services and research effort are driven.

Gates also gave the standing room crowd at the MGM Grand Arena a peek at a host of technologies designed to connect users and information in new ways.

COMDEX, one of the industry's biggest events, showcases the latest and greatest technologies, gadgets and trends. "Wireless technology" was this year's major theme. The largest display there was the Microsoft exhibit, covering some 28,000 square feet.

"Wireless networking technologies such as 802.11b (Wi-Fi) are becoming more commonplace in homes, offices and public spaces such as airports and coffee shops, enabling the PC to extend

its reach beyond the desktop and make itself useful in a broader range of scenarios," Gates said. "In these early years of the 'Digital Decade,' we can already see many of the devices, software and services that will converge to make computing truly personal."

"The whole world of hardware has been delivering at quite a phenomenal rate. It's not just sitting in front of that desktop PC. Over the course of this decade, information and people will come together in new and fun ways, and the technology behind the information will become fully integrated into everyday life." ...Bill Gates

Smart Personal Objects Technology

During his talk, Gates unveiled Microsoft's "Smart Personal Objects Technology," or SPOT which draws its power from the Internet. SPOT adds intelligence and wireless Web connectivity to everyday home appliances ...such as alarm clocks, key chains, wrist watches, stereos and pens.

For example, Gates showed a bedside travel alarm clock with a touch sensitive screen that automatically detects its time zone and adjusts alarm times based on the user's schedule. It can access up-to-date news, weather, traffic and other local and personalized information. The "smart" pen also accesses needed content from the Internet.

A key chain and wrist watch can provide real-time news, personal messages or financial information, and an intelligent refrigerator magnet displays sports updates or acts as a family calendar.

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #2

December 15, 2002

"The simplicity and the low cost are part of the concept," Gates noted. Microsoft has been working on the SPOT project for nearly three years with National Semiconductor, which has already started producing the computer chip sets for the technology-enhanced devices. Microsoft expects that the first generation of smart wireless devices will be in stores by the end of next year.

They operate on an, as yet unidentified, inexpensive wireless technology ...the details of which are supposed to be revealed at January's Consumer Electronics Show. Our guess is it will be the new next generation "IEEE 802.11g" standard, in the process of being completed which will offer high speed Internet access on the unlicensed 2.4GHz band (also shared by ham radio) and be compatible with 802.11b.

802.11 is a family of specifications for wireless local area networks (WLANs) developed by a working group of the *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers*. There are currently four specifications in the family: 802.11, 802.11a, 802.11b, and 802.11g.

New Devices Get Smart and Smarter

Other futuristic gadgets using Microsoft software included the Tablet PC – which uses a stylus and OCR (optical character handwriting recognition) instead of a mouse. And a 'Smart Display,' a portable flat panel "touch-screen" monitor that has a wireless connection to a computer. The user can place the cordless monitor anywhere and still access the PC. Like Tablet PCs, Smart Display screens can be used as writing surfaces.

Gates demonstrated an innovative web service that will be available in the middle of 2003 at all U.S. Kinkos. The service adds an option to a user's print menu from within a document that allows a file to be delivered over the internet to a Kinko outlet anywhere to be printed out.

Dell's first handheld computer was also introduced by Gates. Based on Microsoft's Pocket PC software, the full color Axim X5 is priced at only \$199 and offers more computing power at significantly lower cost than competition. It is Dell's first foray into the handheld PC market, long dominated by Palm.

Gates' first-night speech was practically a state-of-the-union address for the personal computer industry. "Even though we're in an economic downturn, we're in an innovation upturn," Gates observed. "I believe people are dramatically underestimating all the innovation going on in our industry ...all the great products that are on the way, and the positive contribution that technology is making to our economy."

Gates said "It took our industry 20 years to ship one billion PCs, but the next billion will be shipped before the end of this decade." Over 60 percent of U.S. households already have at least one personal computer, while 35 percent have a PC in their living room. Gates predicted that "...over 50 percent of home entertainment systems are expected to feature a PC by 2005, and that computing will play a central role in almost every aspect of home

and work life in the coming years."

So far, Internet appliances have not been that successful and PCs remain the primary conduit to the Internet. But handhelds, intelligent cellphones, the digital music revolution and the sudden growth of Wi-Fi wireless networks have gotten the public used to accessing the Internet on things other than desktop PCs.

Microsoft recently increased its R&D budget to \$5 billion and can afford to take risks in new, untested technologies since it has \$40 billion in cash. For the quarter ended September 30, Microsoft's desktop and notebook Windows unit produced a staggering \$1.7 billion in profit on revenue of \$2.1 billion ...an 80 percent profit margin!

COMDEX in trouble financially

The COMDEX trade show has been shrinking dramatically during the last couple of years and reportedly is now near bankruptcy. Some of the world's largest technology companies did not have booths at COMDEX at all this year ...household names like Sony, Oracle, Gateway, Creative Technologies (Soundblaster) and IBM.

Even so, about 1,000 exhibitors and more than 100,000 attendees showed up ...although it was about one-third less than last year and less than half of Fall 2000's COMDEX 200,000 plus attendance.

The huge drop in attendance is being attributed to the general economy, the state of the technology industry and travel costs. The January Consumer Electronics Show (CES) now is larger than COMDEX.

Mitnick at COMDEX

One of COMDEX's featured programs was a face-to-face ZDNet interview with cyber-villain (and now a celebrity) Kevin Mitnick N6NHG, who was introduced as Co-founder and President of, "Defensive Thinking," and Co-author of "The Art of Deception" (The book was just released last month at \$27.50 ...although it is available on Amazon.com at \$16.50.) Mitnick has been traveling coast-to-coast doing book signings and radio interviews.

The world's most famous (former) hacker fielded questions and gave his perspective on "social engineering ... the low tech threat to high tech security." Mitnick said he is working on raising the money to pay for a security awareness training film called "Defensive Thinking 101," currently in production.

He is also in the process of scheduling seminars around the country to help executives in charge of information security understand and develop their own programs to ensure all workers think defensively. Kevin is not permitted on the Internet, so someone had to put up his company Web site for him at: <www.defensivethinking.com>.

Mitnick had to get special permission to attend COMDEX since, according to the terms of his release from prison, he is forbidden from using a computer or cell phone because of his criminal record involving the use of both devices. And at COMDEX, they are everywhere.

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #3

December 15, 2002

AMATEUR RADIO IN THE NEWS MEDIA

Amateur Radio Operator Network Aids Areas Hit by Storms – is the headline of a story carried by CNN. It tells about how "Amateur radio operators played the role of hero after tornadoes hit East Tennessee. When the phone lines in Morgan County went down, the operators went to work, relaying information among rescue crews, police, fire, and ambulance. In the frantic hours after the twister hit, they were the only way authorities in Morgan County could reach the outside world. And they're all coordinated from an upstairs bedroom at Sheila Tallent's house in Farragut." Sheila is KB4G of Knoxville, TN. "Just after the tornado touched down, local radio reported as many as 260 people in Morgan County were unaccounted for. Mostly they couldn't be contacted because phone lines were down. But through the ham operators, in just hours all but 40 were found." [Cable News Network, November 13.]

Amateur radio operators (Hams) in Washington County took part of a statewide training exercise on November 9. Radio operators tested communication equipment on the HF, VHF and UHF amateur radio bands between local emergency operations centers and the state emergency management center in Salem.

"In the exercise, operators sent drill messages to a simulated emergency operations center and to the amateur radio National Traffic System. Amateur radio communications may be needed in cases of natural disasters such as a severe windstorm, an ice storm, flooding, or an earthquake. Ham radio operators provide a backup communication path if normal communication fail or become overloaded during an emergency."

"The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in Washington County is especially dedicated to that task in support of the Office of Consolidated Emergency Management. Its volunteer members routinely participate in training exercises and public service events to hone their skills for emergency communications." [Hillsboro Argus, OR]

Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members got to work quickly the morning of Sunday, November 17, as an ice storm knocked out power to almost 130,000 Connecticut homes and businesses, mostly in the northwestern part of the state, says the ARRL.

"The statewide alert--and the resulting ARES activation--lasted 48 hours. Connecticut Gov John Rowland toured the region and visited the ham station set up at the Torrington Emergency Operations Center."

"Connecticut Section Emergency Coordinator Allen Pitts, W1AGP, said about 30 hams from all over The Nutmeg State headed into the affected area.... Connecticut ARES had been drilling informally in conjunction with ARES teams in Eastern New York and New Hampshire,

and the effort paid off. Relief efforts by area radio amateurs continued into the evening of November 18, as more than 30,000 electric customers faced another night of frigid temperatures." [ARRL, November 20.]

Ham radio operators find thrill in life's predicaments, headlines a feature story in The Waterloo Courier. "For two guys fiddling around with radios, brothers Lee Walter (WD0HEO) and Ernie Martin (WA0AUU, both of Cresco, IA) have sure gotten themselves in some interesting situations."

"Such is the life for Walter and Martin, founders of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Club, a volunteer group that covers Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota providing emergency communications at disaster sites."

"It's our life," Walter said. "We eat, sleep, drink and dream amateur radio."

"The love affair started in 1958 when the then-seventh-grader Martin walked by a classroom full of space-age equipment squealing weird sounds. He gained special permission to take the high school radio class while he was still in junior high and received his Novice license."

"In 1964, however, Martin truly grasped the power of ham radio. A 7.5 magnitude earthquake rattled Alaska, killing 114 people and disrupting countless lives. More than 2,500 miles away, Martin pointed his radio frequency toward the last frontier and began helping transmit health and welfare messages. The battery operated ham radios helped spread words of comfort from Alaska residents to their friends and family throughout the country."

"Ever since, he and Walter -- who developed the addiction to radios by watching his older brother -- have used their radio waves to help people."

"Six years ago, the brothers decided to take their crusade to a higher level. They transformed an old van into the ham radio mobile and drove to disasters all over the area. They've been to floods and tornadoes and helped in manhunts for missing people. And they donate everything, time, money and equipment." [Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, Iowa - Nov. 19.]

Tower rules could protect birds. New rules that would govern the size and location of rural St. Louis County communication towers drew both praise and criticism. Some people welcome changes saying the new ordinance would safeguard migratory birds.

"This is an issue that kills millions of birds a year," testified Laura Erickson of Duluth, a member of the Audubon Society and American Bird Conservatory. "The largest bird kill within the nation was from 1957-94 in Eau Claire, Wis., where 121,560 birds of 123 species died in collisions with a 1,000-foot tower, according to the web site: <www.towerkill.com>."

The ordinance which calls for commercial communication towers to be located outside significant migratory bird flight paths does not apply to Amateur radio towers. [Duluth News Tribune, Minnesota, Nov. 15.]

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #4

December 15, 2002

CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

Interesting quote from *The Economist*:
"Mainframes ruled the computer industry until the rise of the PC; another 20 years on, the PC's reign now seems to be coming to an end. Previous generations of computers live on-mainframes are widespread, and PCs are certainly not going away-but each successive generation of computing devices is smaller, more personal and more numerous than its predecessor. Mainframes filled whole rooms, and belonged to single companies. PCs sit on desks and are used by individuals or households. Phones are truly personal pocket-sized devices that are carried everywhere. More than a billion people around the world now have one."
<www.economist.com>

EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS

JetBlue Airways, a low-fare, low-cost passenger airline, have planes that are outfitted with all-leather seats. And each is equipped with free live satellite television, offering up to 24 channels of DirecTV® programming. It is the only commercial airline in the world that offers free direct broadcast satellite (DBS) in-flight entertainment.

EchoStar's DISH Network received word from the FCC that it is reinstating its Ka-band license. The agency had canceled the license in June because the popular satellite TV service had not begun construction of a satellite. The loss of a Ka-band license would have put an end to EchoStar's hopes to marry satellite TV with broadband Internet services.

The firm won back the license when it produced records documenting that the satellite designated to carry EchoStar's broadband signal was under construction when the FCC canceled the license. The Ka-band is seen as ideal spectrum for two-way satellite Internet services.

The FCC has authorized many companies to operate Ka-band satellites which have the potential to provide a wide variety of interactive broadband, direct-to-home and digital services to all areas of the United States ...including underserved and rural areas.

The term "Ka-band" refers to a space-to-earth downlink at 17.7 to 20.2 GHz coupled with a 27.5 to 30.0 GHz uplink. At present, people using satellite-based Internet get fast downstream speeds but slow upstream service. The slow service is caused by a half second delay in reaching the satellite in geosynchronous orbit. But it is often the only service available for places that don't have land-based cable or DSL lines.

Phone giant, Verizon Communications said it will begin designing, installing and maintaining wireless "Wi-Fi" Internet networks for small and medium sized businesses.

The Verizon WLAN Solutions program is launching first in the Boston, MA, area. Eventually, the program will go nationwide. Verizon's business customers will have a choice of 2.4GHz 802.11b or the faster 5GHz 802.11a-based products.

Wi-Fi, which allows people to share Internet access inexpensively and relatively easily, is becoming increasingly popular in cafes, airports and hotels. Many are free.

According to research firm Gartner Group, there will be 89,000 public Wi-Fi hot spots available to 99 million Wi-Fi users worldwide by 2006.

Verizon also wants to offer fee-based Wi-Fi access in public places for people who want to log on from their laptops or handheld computers.

Wireless phone carrier T-Mobile, formerly VoiceStream, already offers Wi-Fi "hotspots" in more than 1,000 Starbucks, airport lounges and malls around the country. Unlimited use costs \$30 a month. More at: <multimedia.verizon.com/smallbiz/wirelesslan4>.

E-mail address churn gives Web retailers heartburn. Almost a third of U.S. Internet users change their e-mail addresses each year, costing businesses millions in potential sales, according to a new study by NFO WorldGroup.

Reasons cited for changing e-mail addresses include changing jobs, switching ISPs, or evading spam.

Recently, 87 percent of total respondents had changed a personal e-mail address and 35 percent had changed a work address. At least 16 percent said the change was intended specifically to shake off spammers whose tactics have become increasingly aggressive and subject matter increasingly offensive.

The high turnover rate has caused headaches for legitimate businesses, however, who lose contact with customers who may have volunteered their e-mail addresses as part of the business relationship. Reported by <www.Wired.com>

COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE

Handheld devices, once solely the province of CEOs needing a small electronic organizational device, are another step closer to being accepted as teaching aids in public schools.

Researchers at SRI International said a large-scale two-year study encompassing more than 100 elementary and secondary classrooms shows handheld computers can increase learning. Approximately 90 percent of teachers surveyed say handheld PCs are an effective instructional tool.

Three-quarters of the teachers said handhelds are more easily used in the "flow of classroom activity" than desktop computers and teachers that allowed students to take the handhelds home reported an increase in homework completion rates. The complete report is available at: <www.palmgrants.sri.com>.

Non-profit SRI International <www.sri.com> is one of the world's leading independent research and technology development organizations.

GADGETS & GIZMOS

General Electric Home Products has just come out with a state-of-the-art battery-operated Wireless Digital Weather Station which should make an excellent holiday gift. Standard features such as temperature, humidity, date and time; as well as unique options like forecast, lunar cycles, barometers and even trend graphs.

The two-piece system (each requires batteries) includes a weatherproof sensor (that can be placed indoors or out) to record temperature and humidity, then transmits data through a radio frequency signal to the receiver every 30 seconds. The transmitter has a 100-foot range. Cost is \$39.99 at Target. (There is also a \$19.99 version available with less features.)

Believe it or not, the remote sensor to

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #5

December 15, 2002

weather station transmit frequency is 433-MHz ...right in the middle of the 70-cm ham band. The FCC gives manufacturers special permission to use that frequency on a low power basis..

A **amazon.com, the world's largest Internet retailer, has become the first vendor to sell the well-publicized Segway™ Human Transporter.**

Amazon.com, based in Seattle, began taking orders Nov. 18th for March 2003 delivery. Until that date, only corporate and government organizations could buy Segways.

The Human Transporter is an electric personal-transportation device designed to operate where people walk, according to Manchester, N.H.-based Segway's Web site located at: <www.segway.com>

The two-wheeled gyro-stabilized electric vehicle, which has a platform for riders to stand on, models human balance. Segway is legal to operate in 32 states that have passed laws enabling its use on sidewalks. Price is \$4,950.00 plus a \$99 shipping charge. (A \$495 non-refundable deposit is due now for 2003 delivery.)

Popular Science Magazine has just awarded the Segway™ Human Transporter with its 2002 Best of What's New Award in the general technology category.

INTERNET & WORLD WIDE WEB

You have probably noticed that 'Miss Cleo', the Jamaican TV psychic who offered free readings through late night television commercials aired all over the country has not been seen lately. The ads had been running for some three years. She is now past history.

The Federal Trade Commission filed suit against the service in February claiming the service defrauded millions of customers by misrepresenting costs and by billing for services never purchased. The suit also says consumers have been harassed with unwanted telemarketing calls. Several State Attorney's General filed lawsuits alleging deceptive billing ...charging for psychic hotline calls claimed in ads to be free.

Access Resource Services Inc., and Psychic Readers Network Inc., both based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, allegedly promoted a national network of "psychic readers" on television and the Internet.

The company, which operated on the edge of the law, has agreed to forgive \$500 million in customer billing and to pay a \$5 million fine to the U.S. Government without admitting guilt.

The FTC said the psychic hotline had charged people about \$1 billion ...and collected half of it. Both their telephone pay-per-call service and Web-based psychic consultation network have been shut down.

The FTC said the psychic service promised a free reading through an 800 number, but consumers calling the toll-free number were directed to a 900 number costing \$4.99 per minute. The objective was to keep the customer on the line for as long as possible. According to one news story, a favorite scheme was to tell the caller that their spouse was cheating on them ...provoking a ton of questions at \$4.99 a minute.

The lines were reportedly staffed by thousands of 'psychics' who were recruited and trained through Internet tutorials and detailed scripts to handle Miss Cleo's calls by outside contractors. According to the psychic hotline's owners, only bona-fide 'psychics' were supposed to have been hired.

Calls were routed according to a priority system; 'psychics' with the highest average got the most calls. They were paid a small portion (about 5 percent) of the phone call revenue plus bonuses if they were able to obtain the postal or E-mail address of the customer. Psychics with low call rates got few calls referred to them. The nearly 6 million people that called the number were charged an average of about \$60 each.

And 'Miss Cleo' (her real name is Youree Dell Harris of Miami) is not from the Caribbean at all, instead being born and raised in L.A. She claims only to be an actress, a paid employee. See FTC Web site at: <www.ftc.gov>.

Launched in 1999, the Google search engine now claims to index over 3 billion Web pages. But more than 40 percent of these 3 billion web pages are authored in non-English languages. Google now searches in 27 different languages and more than 50 percent of Google's traffic now comes from overseas.

Since Google is simple (only one line to fill in), fast (searches take less than a second) and relevant (database is updated daily), Web surfers have flocked to the

service, effectively voting it the best search engine around. So powerful has Google become that many companies view it as the Web itself: If you're not listed on its indexes, you effectively do not exist.

Google averages about 15 million visitor hours each month, compared with Yahoo search at 6 million hours. (Yahoo switched to Google in July 2000.) Search hours are calculated by factoring the number of site visitors by the average number of minutes each spends at the site.

High-tech panhandling: just display a handmade sign on a busy Internet corner. Do you remember the piece we did on "Karyn" - the twenty-something gal from Brooklyn, N.Y. - who ran up a huge (\$20,221.40) credit card debt. She started a website on June 23rd at <www.savekaryn.com> asking for donations and opened a "PayPal" credit card payment account so people could donate. "All I need is \$1 from \$20,000 people," she said. And donate they did.

I just checked her website where she had been keeping a running total of online donations (called the Grand Debt Tally) and after 140 days she managed to beg her way out of debt. On Nov. 10 she deactivated her Pay Pal donation account.

Microsoft is leading a coalition of computer and media companies in favor of regulations that would block cable and phone companies from stifling consumer access to lawful Internet content. The group is concerned that cable companies might try to act as a filter between consumers and the Web.

The coalition - which includes Walt Disney, e-Bay, Amazon.com and Apple Computer - expressed their concerns in a Nov. 18 letter to FCC chairman Michael Powell.

The group called on the FCC to ensure that network owners (such as AOL Time Warner) could not use their power to prevent consumers from gaining access to unaffiliated Internet content.

The FCC is considering whether to require cable operators to grant access to unaffiliated Internet-service providers.

On Nov. 22, the Federal Trade Commission approved four small regional non-affiliated ISPs to offer cable broadband service over the AOL network clearing the way for the \$124 billion merger of AOL and Time Warner to go through.

According to Nielsen/NetRatings, Microsoft's Web properties and

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #6

December 15, 2002

those owned by AOL-Time Warner attract the most visitors: ...more than 92 million each during Oct. 2002.

But when measuring the time spent, AOL routed Microsoft. America Online users spent an average of 7 hours 52 minutes online during October compared to Microsoft's 2 hours 27 minutes.

Yahoo were third most popular, with 79.78 million visitors, followed by the U.S. government with 38.3 million and Google with 27.6 million.

The Web's largest auctioneer, e-Bay has gone into the online store business. They announced at the Comdex trade show in Las Vegas that it is consolidating its electronics listings into a single Web store front called "eBay Electronics" and will offer free shipping on some purchases similar to Amazon.com.

eBay will use its platform for fixed-price sales as well as auction-style purchases. New and used computer, networking, telecommunications, photography, DVD and video game categories will be offered.

eBay said it will sell more than \$2 billion worth of electronics goods this year. The free shipping offer actually comes from eBay's sellers, not from the site itself.

The new website "store" can be found at: <ebayelectronics.com>. eBay also operates "Half.com," the largest fixed price person-to-person marketplace on the Internet. <half.ebay.com>

Looking for low price deals on consumer goods? At least two Web sites specialize in scouring the Net to find them for you and then list them on their website. See: <www.fatwallet.com> and <www.dealofday.com>.

American Online has begun selling prepaid Internet access cards similar to those sold for long-distance telephone service. Available at Target stores and Office Depot. The cards cost \$14.99 and feature 500 minutes, or more than eight hours, of dial-up Internet access.

The cards themselves are good for 18 months after purchase, though minutes must be used within 90 days of the card's activation.

As with telephone cards, additional minutes can be added before the card expires. One goal is to convince those customers to upgrade to full monthly or annual plans.

Who says consumers will not pay for online content? The *Wall Street Journal* has 664,000 paying subscribers that pay \$39 to \$79 a year (depending on whether they also subscribe to the print version.) WSJ.com is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web with annual subscription revenue of more than \$30 million. Its editorial content is served up to readers at a rate of up to 2.5 million page views a day.

Yahoo! has been quietly trying to convert its millions of users into paying customers. On November 14th, Yahoo! announced that it is rolling out an enhanced email service. The Yahoo! Mail Plus package, priced at \$29.99 a year, includes the ability to send large files with attachments, message archiving, 25 megabytes of email storage, and 'SpamGuard,' a system to block addresses and apply filters to messages. It also enables subscribers to send emails from domains other than Yahoo.com, using business or personal addresses.

WASHINGTON WHISPERS

With the election over, the U.S. Senate has finally confirmed the fifth FCC Commissioner. The final seat on the Federal Communications Commission was filled on November 14th with Jonathan Adelstein, a long-time telecommunications aide of Democratic Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S. Dak.)

It took almost a year for the Senate to act on the vacancy. Adelstein was nominated by Pres. Bush in February. The FCC had been operating with four commissioners, three Republicans and one Democrat, since September 2001.

Adelstein will complete the remainder of Gloria Tristani's five-year term which expires next June 30. The controversial nomination got caught up in a dispute between Republicans and Democrats over the president's judicial nominations. The Senate approved Adelstein's nomination by voice vote without debate.

Tom Wheeler, President of the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA), praised the appointment of Jonathan Adelstein as FCC Commissioner calling him "...an excellent choice."

Eddie Fritts, President of the National Association of Broadcasters also supported the nomination. "His firm grasp

of broadcasting and telecommunications issues will serve him well at the Commission," Fritts said. "We look forward to working with him."

Get ready for sales and use taxes being imposed on Internet transactions. It is quietly being worked on behind the scenes. Last year, Congress extended a moratorium on Internet taxation. That moratorium expires in November 2003.

More than 30 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have just approved a model law, which would create a system for uniform sales and use tax collection on Internet transactions, for their legislatures to consider.

A sales tax is placed on goods or services when it is purchased from a company that has a physical presence in the same state as the consumer. When a consumer buys from a retailer that is outside of his or her state, it is called a use tax. But it amounts to the same thing: a tax on goods or services purchased.

America's states believe the current sales and use tax system, with its 7,500 state and local taxing jurisdictions across the nation, is antiquated, terribly complex, and cumbersome to businesses in today's new economy. One of the problems with so many taxing jurisdictions is that they often have different laws or definitions of what is taxable.

Currently, 45 states have a sales and use tax. Under current law, retailers that sell to consumers in a state in which they have a physical presence are required to collect and remit sales taxes. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that businesses that do not have a physical presence in a state cannot be not required to collect and remit use taxes.

In this case, consumers legally still have the responsibility to calculate and pay the use tax directly to their own state. But there is no way to administer the program and the tax is universally not paid.

The Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP) is a combined effort of U.S. states, with input from local governments and the private sector, to design, test, and implement a radically simplified sales and use tax system for the 21st century.

The National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Federation of Tax Administrators, the Multistate Tax Commission and most states are all involved in the project.

The SSTP is a two-part process. First, states must pass enabling legislation, which

WSYI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #7

December 15, 2002

allows tax administrators of the different states to work together to craft a new set of model sales tax laws.

Second, states must individually amend their sales tax laws to conform to the model legislation ...Including adopting uniform product codes, developing uniform definitions of state tax laws and limiting the frequency local governments can change their tax rates.

The objective is to provide online and other retailers that do business in multiple states an easier way to calculate, collect, and remit existing sales and use taxes. The project attempts to tear down administrative burdens and use emerging technologies to substantially reduce the burdens of tax collection.

Under the new streamlined approach, businesses would assume the responsibility for collecting and remitting all sales and use taxes including those made to customers located outside their state.

Under the new system, small and medium sized multi-state retailers would be able to use state-certified, specially-designed software at no expense to calculate, collect and remit use taxes for transactions in states in which they do not have a physical presence.

Members of the National Governors Association hope that the existence of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project will convince Congress to allow such taxation. They argue that the economic downturn has had a very negative impact on state revenue.

The question is whether Congress will allow their constituents to be saddled with additional billions in taxes not previously paid. In the past, President Bush has supported the continued ban on Internet taxation.

High power, long-range wireless LANs may be on the way. Two U.S. Senators, Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and George Allen (R-Va.), plan to introduce a bill early next year called "The Juumpstart Broadband Bill" that will permit more powerful and cheaper long-range wireless networks that could bring high-speed Internet access to small cities and rural areas.

The Boxer-Allen bill requires the FCC to make more free-to-use broadcast spectrum available for use by devices that incorporate new technology like Wireless Fidelity (also known as Wi-Fi). "Right now, these kinds of technologies are limited to a small portion of the spectrum, which limits their development," Boxer

said.

The bill asks the FCC to make available more free-to-use spectrum in a band that will allow the deployment of radio signals for miles at a time.

Be very careful in giving out your e-mail address. The Federal Trade Commission tested how posting e-mail addresses in different places on the Internet impacted getting unsolicited commercial advertisements ("Spam.")

Investigators posted 250 brand new (that is, first time used) e-mail addresses in 175 different online locations, including chat rooms, news groups and message boards, and monitored them for six weeks. Here is what they learned:

- All of the e-mail addresses posted in chat rooms received spam, including one that received spam only eight minutes after the address was posted.
- Eighty-six percent of the e-mail addresses posted at newsgroups and Web pages received spam; as did 50 percent of addresses at free personal Web page services.
- Twenty-seven percent received spam e-mail after posting to message boards.
- Nine percent received spam after being listed in e-mail service directories.
- The type of spam received was not related to the sites where the e-mail addresses were posted. For example, e-mail addresses posted to children's newsgroups received a large amount of adult content and work-at-home spam.
- 63 Percent of links in spam fail to remove a user when requested.

Unsolicited messages made up 36% of all e-mail. According to eMarketer, 76 billion spam e-mails that will be delivered in 2003. Due to its low cost, bulk e-mailers generally make a profit if they get only 1 response for every 100,000 messages.

FCC ENFORCEMENT NEWS

California Speedway of Fontana, California has been ordered by the FCC to pay an \$8,000 fine for operating an unlicensed FM broadcast radio station on 104.7 MHz. The speedway said "the one-watt transmitter was only used during events and operated under Part 15 rules."

Field strength measurements, however, revealed that the radio emissions greatly exceeded the levels allowed for non-licensed Part 15 operation and was

254 times that permitted by the Rules. (63,500 uV/m vs. an allowed 250 uV/m measured at 3 meters.)

The speedway argued that the equipment was recommended to it as providing enhanced public address features which it was interested in providing and was led to believe that the equipment was FCC compliant although "...the manufacturer advised it to turn down the unit's output control if it received any complaints of interference during use...."

It selected 104.7 MHz because the closest FM radio station operating on that frequency was 70 miles away. The fine must be paid by December 12, 2002.

According to an FCC news release, **Benjamin Leroy Carter, AKA Malik "Copafeel" Abdul, pleaded guilty in federal district court to seven counts of unlicensed operation.**

Carter, a native of Haiti, now residing in Orlando, Florida, was released on bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for February 5, 2003.

The conviction is the result of an investigation that began in February of 1999. The Commission's Tampa Florida Office received complaints from residents and broadcasters in the Orlando Florida area of interference to the reception of licensed broadcast stations in the area.

Carter agreed to forfeit all equipment used in connection with the unlicensed operation.

Richard Muñoz, of Naples, Florida was fined \$10,000 for unlicensed operation of an FM broadcast radio station on 105.1 MHz at the Tree of Life Church in Naples. Muñoz was identified as the pastor of the Spanish-language Mission Possible Ministries. A brochure advertised the 105.1 MHz religious programming. The fine was to have been paid by November 24, 2002.

Lightning Electronics, Inc., of Miami, Florida has been fined \$7,000 for marketing unapproved long-range cordless telephones. The Federal Aviation Administration had reported to the FCC that it was receiving sporadic interference to an aviation frequency in the Miami, Florida, area.

The FCC later identified the source of the interference as a long-range cordless telephone being operated from an electronics store in Miami.

The long-range cordless telephones displayed and offered for sale at the store were capable of causing serious

interference to aviation communications.

As a result of the FAA's concerns, the FCC launched a nationwide investigation into the unlawful marketing and use of long-range cordless telephones and discovered that the devices are being illegally marketed in several states.

In related news, the American Radio Relay League has asked the FCC to investigate and "take appropriate action" against several companies it alleges have been marketing so-called "long-range cordless telephones" via the Internet. The ARRL took the action in the wake of an interference complaint and numerous reports from the amateur community about sales of the devices, some operating on amateur VHF and UHF frequencies.

The League was able to obtain one of the long-distance cordless telephones for testing. The device, made in China and bearing no FCC identification number or label, operates near 147 MHz with an output power greater than 3 W. "Other such phones are advertised as having ranges of up to 100 km operating at power levels of up to 35 W on VHF and UHF," ARRL said.

Two radio communications pioneers recently achieved a major breakthrough: the first two-way digital voice transmission across the Atlantic via Amateur Radio. Doug Smith, KF6DX, and Didier Chulot, F5MJN, successfully transmitted and received HF digital speech signals on Friday, November 22, 2002 between Sevierville, TN and Paris, France.

The feat was accomplished using Ten-Tec transceivers and digital audio systems from Thales Communications (pronounced "tail'-ess") in Paris.

Operating station F8KGG, Chulot spoke with Smith for several minutes using the high-frequency digital link, operating within a 3-kHz bandwidth. The contact occurred on 21,218 kHz. Signal strength was S-5 to S-7.

The two stations demonstrated the advantages of digital audio during the conversation, including noise-free, FM-like reception and the potential for simultaneous voice and data.

The Ten-Tec/Thales system is based on a new international broadcasting standard adopted last year by the ITU, an arm of the United Nations. The Amateur Radio version is expected to appear on the market next year. [Ten-Tec Press release]

LATE BULLETIN - WRC-2003 CONFERENCE PREPARATORY MEETING

The second most important international meeting of the World Radiocommunication Conference process got underway on November 18 in Geneva.

The Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) continued until November 29 with some 1000 delegates attended the worldwide gathering. Chairing the CPM is Germany's Eberhard George, DL7IH.

The CPM provides the foundation upon which the WRC is conducted. Its output is a mammoth (about 500-page) CPM Report which becomes the technical resource and foundation for the upcoming WRC which takes place June 9 to July 4, 2003 ...also in Geneva. The CPM Report is structured to follow the topics of the WRC-03 agenda. Its outline was developed and approved nearly two years ago.

The consolidated draft CPM Report is prepared by the CPM Management Team assisted by the Chairpersons of Study Groups, Working Parties and Task Groups and submitted to all Member States of the ITU and to the Radiocommunication Sector Members.

The CPM Report comprises seven Chapters. Chapter 5 covers "Maritime mobile, amateur and amateur-satellite, and broadcasting services in MF and HF bands."

The report contains the proposals of the various administrations, particularly those that reflect a degree of regional consensus. It is drafted in three languages, English, French and Spanish.

Amateur Radio is represented by the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) at the meeting.

The CPM Report was drafted in June 2002 and distributed in three languages in September. The November 18 to 29 meeting is to consider the draft.

The main issues related to Article 25:

- 1) Suppression of the "prohibition of international communications"
- 2) Updating of the "plain language requirements"
- 3) Eliminating ambiguous wording and obsolete restrictions while retaining the non-commercial nature of the service
- 4) Modification of "transmitting international communications on behalf of third parties."
- 5) Elimination or Modification of the amateur operator rule requiring testing of Morse code proficiency

[One version eliminates the necessity for amateurs operating HF to demonstrate telegraphy knowledge. Another proposes that "Administrations shall determine whether or not a person seeking a license to operate an amateur station shall prove that this person is able to send correctly texts in Morse code signals.]

- 6) Modification of "verifying the operator qualification of radioamateurs"

[There seems to be three versions of S25.6.2. "Administrations shall verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate the apparatus of an amateur station.

Another version adds the following line: "A person seeking a license to operate an amateur station shall be required to demonstrate a knowledge of the topics specified in Recommendation ITU-R M.1544."

And still another version changes this line to: "Standards of competence are contained in the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.1544."]

- 7) Suppression of the "maximum power of amateur station" rule

[...since S15.2 already requires that "transmitting stations shall radiate only as much power as is necessary to ensure a satisfactory service".]

- 8) Adding that Administrations should take steps to allow amateurs to support the communications needs during disasters
- 9) Adding that Administrations should take steps "permitting foreign amateur to operate amateur station temporarily in its territory"
- 10) Expanding amateur call sign combinations to more than one or two prefix characters and a single digit, followed by a group of not more than suffix three letters.

According to the ARRL, "A thornier issue is 7-MHz harmonization." The IARU backs a 300-kHz worldwide allocation in the vicinity of 7 MHz. Dave Sumner K1ZZ, attending in his role as International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) secretary, said "At this stage, we have six methods to address the agenda item, including no change in the status quo."

In addition to Sumner, those representing the IARU at the CPM include President Larry Price, W4RA, and Region 1 Executive Committee member Wojciech Nietyksza, SP5FM. IARU Vice President David Wardlaw, VK3ADW, is on the Australian delegation and ARRL Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, is on the US delegation.

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #9

December 15, 2002

AMATEUR RADIO STATION CALL SIGNS

...sequentially issued as of the first of December 1, 2002:

District	Extra	Advanced	Tech./General/Novice
0	AB0XC	KI0SK	→ KC0ONJ
1	AB1BR	KE1ME	→ KB1JBR
2	AB2PY	KG2RR	→ KC2KNG
3	AA3DI	KF3EE	→ KB3IVB
4	AG4WR	KV4GQ	→ KG4WDL
5	AD5MX	KM5XU	→ KD5UMU
6	AE6JI	KR6FD	→ KG6OCD
7	AC7WJ	KK7XM	→ KD7TKL
8	AB8PY	KI8KD	→ KC8VFX
9	AB9GS	KG9QU	→ KC9CUF
Hawaii	→	AH6RO	NH7PL WH6DGT
Alaska	→	AL7RS	KL1KA WL7CVR
Virgin Isl.	→	KP2CS	NP2MI WP2AIP
Puerto Rico	→	KP3BN	WP3VB WP4NOZ

[Source: FCC Amateur Service Database, Washington, DC]

IARU REGION 1 CONFERENCE HELD IN SAN MARINO

Each of the three IARU regions holds a conference once every three years. The ITU Region One Conference of the International Amateur Radio Union took place in San Marino (Italy) between November 10 and 15. More than 150 amateurs representing 42 of the 87 IARU member-societies in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East attended the six-day conference.

It was hosted by ARRSM (Associazione Radioamatori Della Repubblica di San Marino) at the Casa San Giuseppe Hotel. An opening dinner was served the night before. Special event station Tango 7 IARU (T7IARU) was activated by the conference delegates.

Attending the Council meeting were IARU President Larry Price, W4RA; Vice President David Wardlaw, VK3ADW; Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ; regional representatives Lou van de Nadort, PA0LOU; Tim Hughes, G3GVV; Ole Garpestad, LA2RR; Pedro Seidemann, YV5BPG; Rod Stafford, W6ROD; Fred Johnson, ZL2AMJ; Peter Naish, VK2BPN; K. C. Selvadurai, 9V1UV and recording secretary Paul Rinaldo, W4RI.

International Amateur Radio Union AC Meeting

The IARU Administrative Council's annual meeting took place November 7 and 8 at the same hotel just before the Region 1 Conference. Preparations for next year's World Radiocommunication Conference dominated discussions at the meeting which reviewed WRC-2003 agenda items of importance to radioamateurs.

These include harmonization of amateur and broadcasting allocations in the vicinity of 7MHz, and possible revision of Article 25 of the international Radio Reg-

ulations. Article 25 includes the current requirement to demonstrate Morse code proficiency.

During its San Marino session the Administrative Council affirmed its policy supporting the removal of Morse code testing as an ITU requirement to obtain an amateur license to operate on frequencies below 30MHz – a position adopted in October 2001 at its last annual meeting. The Council also reviewed and updated a working document on the present and anticipated future Amateur and Amateur-Satellite spectrum requirements.

The next IARU Administrative Council will be September 6-8 in Taipei, Taiwan, following the IARU Region 3 Conference.

The IARU Region 1 Conference

The 19th General Conference commenced on Sunday, November 10th when Julian Giacomoni T77J, president of the *San Marino Amateur Radio Association* and Dr. Emma Rossi, Minister of Telecommunications welcomed delegates to the Conference. IARU President Larry Price W4RA, spoke briefly.

The conference was then formally declared open by the ITU's Robert W Jones, ex-VE3CTM (now VE7RWJ). Jones is the outgoing director of the *International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Bureau*.

Jones has served the maximum two 4-year terms in that capacity and is in the process of being replaced by Valery Timofeev, Russia's *Deputy Minister for Communications and Informatization* who was elected to the post in October. It will be the first time in more three decades that a radioamateur has not headed up the ITU Radio-communication Bureau.

The various IARU working groups met on Sunday and Monday to discuss the work of the conference. The conference also reviewed a new program for the development of Amateur Radio in Africa, the continuation of the IARU monitoring system and new moves in Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF).

The shrinking number of radioamateurs is also a concern to IARU Region One. Only a few societies have reported membership gains, the membership of many others is static and several societies have reported membership losses. As a result, part of the IARU Liaison Officer workshop was spent on membership development.

Funding of National Societies is also a huge problem in ITU Region One. Many Societies asked for financial support to attend the Conference including Estonia, Mali, Cyprus, Iceland, Kenya, South Africa, Bulgaria, Senegal, Nigeria, Albania) and Syria but all could not be supported.

Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC):

The IARU Region 1 Conference adopted a set of guidelines for evaluating Amateur Radio stations with respect of RF exposure limits. These will enable Amateurs to assess whether their station and its antennas in any way approach the maximum limits for exposure to RF fields.

W5YI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

Page #10

December 15, 2002

The Conference discussed the threat to Amateur Radio communications from PLC (power line communications) systems. It was noted that some countries were taking a much more cautious approach to allowing PLC to operate than those in Europe.

World Radiocommunications Conference 2003:

As one might expect, the main topic of the conference was the upcoming WRC-2003 which will be held next summer in Geneva.

A number of HF issues on the agenda were discussed including the revision of ITU-RR Article S25 which contains the international rules for the Amateur and Amateur Satellite Services. That article includes the requirement for radio amateurs to demonstrate Morse code proficiency for access to bands below 30 MHz.

The conference backed the current IARU position on Article 25 of the Radio regulations and the qualifications needed to hold an Amateur Radio operator license.

Also endorsed were several IARU Administrative Council resolutions including support for the removal of Morse code testing as an ITU requirement for Amateur operation on frequencies below 30 MHz.

The German DARC delegation wanted Morse code testing to remain an option for Amateur licensing, even though it is likely to be no longer a mandatory requirement after WRC-2003. An opinion poll conducted by the DARC showed that more than half of all German members wanted to keep Morse code as a test requirement for HF amateurs.

It was also reported that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in DARC about how the Morse code issue was handled in Region 1 with questions being raised about what was agreed to at the previous Region One Conference.

The DARC urged the various IARU Region 1 radio societies to ask their authorities to keep the telegraphy examination requirement.

The proposal and need to provide an exclusive 300 kHz wide allocation to Amateur Radio around 7MHz was covered which would result in a worldwide harmonized 40 meter allocation.

Other topics included the relevance of "Little LEOs" (low earth orbiting) satellites, non-geostationary, and non-voice mobile satellites, which are seeking allocations above and below 1 GHz.

Another discussion addressed HF broadcasting which is seeking more channels between 4 and 10 MHz. In the interest of spectrum efficiency, HF broadcasters are being encouraged to convert their transmissions to digital modulation. And the Earth Exploration Satellite Service is seeking up to 6 MHz of spectrum in the 420 to 470 MHz band.

A number of HF Contest rules were discussed along with possible realignment of some IARU contest dates.

UK's new Foundation License:

The success of the new entry-level Foundation License in the United Kingdom attracted much favorable comment from the conference attendees, and the *Radio Society of Great Britain* (RSGB) ran out of information packets to give to interested delegations. Many national societies are looking very carefully at the Foundation License and some are already talking with their administrations about a similar scheme.

A new Executive Committee:

Several members of the existing Region 1 Executive Committee retire at the end of this year, and an election was held for a new EC. Elected was Norway's Ole Garpestad, LA2RR as its new Chairman. The other officers: Vice-Chairman: Tafa Diop, 6W1KJ; Secretary: Don Beattie, G3BJ and Treasurer: Andreas Thiemann, HB9JOE. EC members: Abdi Razak A.AI- Shahwarzi, A41JT; Hans-Heinrick Ehlers, DF5UG; Panayot Davev, LZ1US; Hans Blondeel Timmerman, PA7BT and Max Raicha, 5Z4MR.

Bands and Band Plans:

An RSGB proposal to work for an Amateur allocation between 495 and 505 kHz (recently vacated by maritime users) was adopted to by Conference along with a 136 kHz band plan and frequencies to be set aside for slow speed CW. A new approach to HF and VHF/UHF band planning was adopted which considers modes by emission bandwidth.

The RSGB 70 MHz band was added to the IARU Region 1 Band plans. Many countries are now very interested in the possibility of an allocation at 70 MHz.

A number of detailed changes were made to band plans, especially to repeater planning in the 432 MHz band. These will not be effective immediately, to allow time for national discussions and changes.

Band planning above 20 GHz was discussed, with some changes being agreed to by the delegations.

Other topics included frequency allocations for the emerging digital modes, modifications to repeater channels on some bands and creation of a working group on new digital modulation techniques.

An RSGB Proposal to establish a Region 1 Emergency Communications Coordinator was endorsed by conference, and Gordon Adams, G3LEQ, was appointed to this role.

Conference closed on November 15:

...with a final meeting to confirm the various recommendations prepared by the working groups. The IARU Region One Conference selected Davos, Switzerland, as the site of its next conference, set for September 2005.

Several of those attending the San Marino conference headed directly to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Conference Preparatory Meeting in Geneva that had been scheduled November 18-29.